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THE ATTITUDE OF AMOS AND HOSEA TOWARD THE MONARCHY. II.⁸

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II. HOSEA.

The book of Hosea presents greater difficulties of interpretation than those to be found in Amos. Here, too, no positive dates can be assigned, and it is necessary to divide the book into two divisions, chaps. 1-3 and 4-14, which are in many respects so distinct that Volz⁹ has even gone so far as to suggest that they may come from two different authors. The date of chaps. 4-14 may be fixed with some confidence as later than the death of Jeroboam II., and they cover a period extending at least to the eve of the appearance of Tiglath Pileser in northern Palestine in 733, and possibly beyond that date. Chaps. 1-3, on the other hand, summarize Hosea's preaching prior to the death of Jeroboam, and so proceed from about the same time as that covered by the activity of Amos, though it seems probable that his call to the prophetic work and his household experiences related in chaps. 1 and 3 may have antedated the call of Amos. These events must have covered several years, and whether the woman of chap. 3 be identical with Gomer, as seems more likely, or is a different woman, some time must have elapsed when the prophet, about the close of the reign of Jeroboam II. or perhaps later, wrote out this section with its combination of history and prophecy.¹⁰ The form of these chapters is peculiar; and it is not improbable that the present somewhat artificial arrangement may be due to another hand than that of the prophet.¹¹ Omitting 1:7, which may well be regarded

⁸Concluded from the BIBLICAL WORLD for November, 1902, pp. 361-9.

⁹*Die vorexilische Jahveprophetie und der Messias.*

¹⁰SEESEMAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-6.

¹¹DAVIDSON, art. "Hosea" in HASTINGS's *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. II, pp. 42, 43; VOS, *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, 1898, p. 232.

as a marginal gloss, the passage falls into three sections, each of which passes from denunciation to promise. These sections are 1:2—2:2 (Heb.); 2:3—25; 3:1—5. Some recent scholars have on various grounds rejected the verses containing the elements of promise, and have reduced the prophecy to a dead level of denunciation and doom, and have caused Hosea, as they have already caused Amos, to fail in one of the distinctive features of the prophet—the hope for the future. But, assuming that the present arrangement of these chapters is purely literary, and that it does not in any way represent the original method of oral delivery, the difficulty occasioned by the objection that the prophet would not be likely to blunt the edge of his denunciations by following them with glowing promises in the next breath largely disappears. The denunciations are especially severe. Directed at first against the house of Jehu and then against the royal power of Israel, they culminate in the first subdivision with the rejection of the people and the breaking of the covenant relation which bound the people and their God together. The purpose of the breaking of his covenant relation is brought out in the next subdivision—it is disciplinary. Israel is to learn that Jehovah is her sole support, that she is a pensioner in Jehovah's land on Jehovah's bounty. The means of inflicting the punishment is also indicated—it is to be by exile. Far from her land, without the ordinary means of worship and without regular political organization, she shall learn the meaning of her experience and shall appreciate her true relation to Jehovah. The punishment will not fail of its desired effect, and this leads us naturally to the other side of the picture—the promises and the conception of the new organization. For our purposes it seems best to consider 2:1, 2 with 3:5, for by so doing we get the clearest picture of the prophet's conception of the means and the form of the restoration. The members of the dead kingdom of Israel in exile shall not seek a restoration of their own political organization, but shall turn to Jehovah their God and David their king. Or, in other words, they shall renew once more their allegiance to the Davidic monarchy, separation from which had been their initial sin, and shall wor-

ship Jehovah in his chosen seat. United to Judah and under the leadership of their temporal head, they shall go forth from the land of their exile, and shall make their freedom sure by a victory in Jezreel, which shall cause that name to lose its evil omen as the memorial of the bloody foundation of the dynasty of Jehu, and give it a new significance as the symbol of the divine replanting of the people in their own land. With this renewed and reorganized people, conscious at last of their true relation to Jehovah, Jehovah will establish a new covenant of peace, and will favor them in their land with an abundance of material blessings.

This picture, except in details, is not different from that of Amos. The destruction of the monarchy is just as complete; but according to Hosea the members of the sinful nation shall learn the significance of their punishment and turn back to their God and be restored, while Amos holds out hope only for the good grain which is saved in the sifting process. Again, Hosea seems to look forward to a return of the exiled Israel from the land of the exile, while Amos holds out no hope of that kind. And lastly, while Amos declares that Judah must suffer under the hand of the invader, Hosea utters no word of condemnation of the southern kingdom. In these three chapters, then, Hosea sees the hope for the future in the monarchy, and in the monarchy as it has maintained itself in the southern kingdom. The northern kingdom must be destroyed as a political and a religious entity, and the new order of things centers about the Davidic king of Judah, and then under the rule of this king the messianic age shall dawn.

The contrast between chaps. 1-3 and 4-14, from the point of view of their judgment of the monarchy, has not been sufficiently appreciated. Indeed, many writers have sought to maintain that there is no essential variance. Kirkpatrick, for example, says that "there is here [chaps. 4-14] no reference to the reunion of Israel with Judah, or to the Davidic king; but it does not follow that those features in the earlier picture of the restoration . . . have been forgotten. Completeness is not to be expected everywhere."¹² Smend, on the other hand, insists that,

¹² *Doctrine of the Prophets*², pp. 136, 137.

since the attitude of Hosea to the monarchy in chaps. 4-14 is incompatible with the mention of the Davidic king in chaps. 1-3, therefore the reference to the Davidic king is not authentic.¹³ Neither of these opinions does justice to the peculiar teaching of these later chapters. Nor is it sufficient to say that Hosea regards the separate existence of the northern kingdom as a sin, though undoubtedly most of the denunciations in these chapters are directed especially against the northern monarchy. This is probably the case with those striking passages which refer to the existent confusion and anarchy.¹⁴ But surely this is not a satisfactory interpretation of the scornful question: "Where now is thy king that he may save thee, and thy princes that they may judge thee, of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes?"¹⁵ The reference here is without any doubt to the demand of the people as recorded in 1 Sam. 8:19, 20, and the divine judgment given in Hosea, that the permission to establish a monarchy was given in wrath, just as the end of the monarchy was to come in wrath, does not differ essentially from the judgment given in 1 Sam. 8:7-9. Furthermore, this reference, which an unprejudiced interpretation can regard only as a condemnation of the monarchy as an institution, is supported by other references in these chapters which have caused an endless amount of discussion, but which, nevertheless, seem capable of a simple and natural explanation. The first of these is 9:9, "They have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah;" and the second, which undoubtedly refers to the same event, is in 10:9, "O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah." Opinions have varied as to whether the allusion here is to the outrage recorded in Judg. 19:16 ff., to the establishment of the monarchy under Saul a man of Gibeah, or to some unrecorded event in Israelitish history. On our interpretation, the reference can be only to the foundation of the monarchy, a sign of the inherently rebellious disposition of the people of Israel and a chief

¹³ *Alttestamentliche Religionsgeschichte* 2, p. 209, note 2.

¹⁴ E. g., 7:1-7; 8:4; 9:15.

¹⁵ 13:10, reading with Houtsma, Wellhausen, Smith, Nowack, *et al.*

cause of the present desperate condition.¹⁶ Their attempt to put themselves on the same plane with other nations has involved them in the same fate with other Palestinian states, and their politics can lead only to their humiliation before Assyria. It is also highly probable that in the declaration that "all their wickedness is in Gilgal" (9:15) there is another reference to the founding of the monarchy which is described in 1 Sam. 11:14, 15 as the renewing of the kingdom. And, again, our view that Hosea rejects the monarchy theoretically as well as practically is strengthened by the consideration of his conception of the form under which the new order of things should manifest itself. This is suggested in 14:2-9 (Heb.)—a passage against whose genuineness no really convincing argument has as yet been brought. Here there is no mention of a king, nor indeed of any form of government or organization. There is a return to a peaceful agricultural condition in which Ephraim shall recognize his direct dependence upon Jehovah, and shall derive from him directly both his protection and his strength. The old political and military policy shall become a thing of the past, for military organization, and even alliances with the great power of Assyria, have brought only ruin in their train. This idyllic state is promised to Ephraim and to Ephraim only; at the last Hosea has no message of hope for Judah. But has he any message at all for Judah in these later chapters? Many would answer this question in the negative, notwithstanding the fact that the word Judah is found no less than twelve times in these chapters. In a few passages, it is true, the sense is confessedly obscure, but in the others it does not seem necessary to change the text. Assuming the genuineness of these passages, the attitude of the prophet toward Judah which they indicate is in perfect accord with the interpretation which we have adopted of his attitude to the monarchy in general. The tone is uniformly unfavorable and condemnatory, as if it were impossible for the prophet to see in such a sinful and corrupt state as Judah any hope for the future kingdom of Jehovah. In 4:15 we might well

¹⁶ CORNILL, *Königsberger Studien*, p. 25; SMEND, *op. cit.*, pp. 208, 209; DAVIDSON, *ut supra*.

find the first indication of this new judgment of Judah—new as compared with the one which, on our view, he held during the earlier years of his prophetic activity. He sees that Judah is entering upon the same path of folly and ignorance which is proving so disastrous to Israel. In several cases Judah is condemned for engaging in the same silly political practices as her more powerful northern sister (5:12-14). She, too, relies upon military defenses (8:14), and in every way her character and her attitude toward Jehovah are as unsatisfactory as those of Israel (6:4; 12:1, Heb.). This last passage is somewhat doubtful, and seems to have been regarded by the Revisers as most probably a commendation of Judah, though in the margin they give an alternative rendering with the opposite sense. It seems impossible to hold to the view that the prophet is here commending Judah for her faithfulness to Jehovah. The fact is that throughout these chapters he has only words of blame and reproof for the sinful course which Judah is pursuing. We are obliged, therefore, to adopt the marginal rendering as coming the nearest to the original meaning of the prophet. In consequence of her sins the punishment of Judah is as inevitable as that of Israel (6:11; 10:11; 12:13). If Judah is referred to at all in these chapters, it is clear that she is distinctly and positively condemned.

We are now met by a difficult question. If our interpretation is correct, we are obliged to hold that in the course of the book of Hosea we find a radical change in his attitude, in the first place toward Judah, and then toward the monarchy as an institution. How is this change to be accounted for? The most probable answer, as it seems to us, is that it is to be explained on the ground of the well-known change in the circumstances and relations of the two kingdoms, and especially in the policy of Judah during the few years which followed the death of Jeroboam II. and Uzziah. During the reign of Uzziah, Judah had refrained from meddling in the political affairs of her more powerful neighbors on the north; and, on the whole, she seems to have been, during the greater part of the long reign of this monarch, fairly faithful to the religious requirements which were imposed upon her.

With the accession of Ahaz, however, a new policy was introduced. Either purposely or, as he may have thought, of necessity, Ahaz brought Judah into the current of international politics when he began his political intrigues with Tiglath Pileser, thereby incurring the condemnation of Isaiah. With this change in policy the character of Judah was radically changed. What hope could there be for a righteous government under such a king as Ahaz or in such a monarchy as he was making Judah? It is not probable that Hosea would sympathize very strongly with the policy of Pekah and Rezin when they sought to force Judah to enter into a coalition with them, but it is equally improbable that he could look with approval upon the action of Ahaz in summoning Tiglath Pileser to his aid, thereby taking his stand definitely and finally as an enemy of his brethren in the northern kingdom. What is more likely than that Hosea is referring to just this action of Ahaz when in 5:10 he says that "the princes of Judah are like them that remove the landmark"—the landmark here being the relation between the two kingdoms which Ahaz was seeking to break by his intrigues with Assyria to gain control of the whole of Palestine? Wellhausen¹⁷ in his note on 5:13 has raised the question as to whether Hosea is referring in this denunciation to those actions on the part of Ahaz which are so familiar because of the light thrown upon them by Isaiah, who was active in the southern kingdom at just this period. It is true that Wellhausen decides against this explanation, but in his rejected suggestion he has, in our judgment, furnished the key for the explanation of this entire passage in the fifth chapter, and also for the question with which we are just now immediately concerned. For if our interpretation is the correct one, then there is a natural and sufficient ground for Hosea's change of attitude with regard to Judah. On this interpretation, it was inevitable that Hosea should express his opinion of Judah, for otherwise we should have no clue to his peculiar change of attitude toward the whole subject of the right of the monarchy to a place in a community which should give expression to the will of Jehovah. It is not

¹⁷ *Kleine Propheten*¹, pp. 112, 113.

necessary, therefore, to insist upon bringing both parts of the prophecy into harmony either by rejecting the reference to the reunion of the two kingdoms which is found in the first part, or, on the other hand, by forcing the second part to yield a messianic significance similar to that contained in the first part. Nor are we justified either in inferring that the two parts came from different authors. It is surely not an unheard-of thing that the prophetic judgment of a man or of an institution should be altered in the course of years, especially when the relation of the man or the institution to the permanent underlying principles of Jehovah's moral government has undergone a radical transformation.

With this we bring our discussion to an end. If we have found the correct interpretation, we have seen that, inasmuch as no prophet is without concern for the future of Jehovah's kingdom, the question as to the form which that kingdom shall assume is ever prominent in the mind of every prophet. One of the most frequently recurring figures is that of the monarchy, and hence many of the prophets looked forward to the perpetuation of the monarchical form of government, usually under the rule of a descendant of David. This is the attitude of Amos, who expects those who shall be spared by the invader of northern Israel to attach themselves to the Davidic monarchy. Hosea at first took essentially the same position, though his view seems to be that, with the aid of the Davidic king, repentant Israel shall be led back from her exile. Later, however, under materially different circumstances, Hosea rejects the monarchy altogether, sees nothing good in Judah, and looks forward to a restoration of Ephraim in which all the current forms of organized government shall be wholly lacking, and in which the individual and the community shall live in a relation of direct dependence on Jehovah. In this judgment, as is so often the case with Hosea, we have occasion to note his deep spiritual insight, as he anticipates the dawn of that era when the kingdom not of this world should be established in which "one is our Master, even Christ, and all we are brethren."